

9 killed, houses, palace burnt in Kogi communal clash

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NINE persons have been killed and houses, including the palace of the Ohiagba of Ebira Mozum in Bassa Local Government Area of Kogi State were attacked in a clash between the people of Bassa Komu and Ebira Mozum communities.

Sources said on Friday that the violence between the two communities was as a result of the killing of a palm wine tapper and a farmer on Monday.

The sources said Ebira Mozum was attacked on Thursday afternoon and the incident left nine dead and the traditional ruler's palace and several other houses burnt down.

It was gathered that for about three hours, sporadic gunshots were fired at Udogbo, a Bassa community, in the early hours of Thursday, which caused some residents to panic and flee.

One Malam Yaro stated that the Thursday violence was an offshoot of last week's crisis which claimed casualties on both sides.

According to him, the Thursday violence started with sporadic gunshots in Udogbo community with the people running helter-skelter.

He called on the state government to halt the bloodletting, saying that in the last four years, business activities had reduced due to incessant

conflicts in the area.

Speaking on the incident, the state Police Public Relations Officer, Williams Ayah, confirmed the renewed violence but said normalcy had returned to the area.

Meanwhile, the state governor, Yahaya Bello, has called for calm between the two communities.

The governor, in a statement on Friday by his Chief Press Secretary, Onogwu Muhammed, expressed concern over the incident but assured that the government was on top of the situation.

Bello said the government had received intelligence on the situation and promised that those masterminding the ethnic crisis would be arrested and made to face the wrath of the law.

The statement said following Monday's killings, the government acted swiftly by deploying security agents made up of men of the army, the navy, the DSS, the police, Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps and local vigilantes to restore peace in the area.

The governor, the statement said, directed the security agents to ensure no further loss of life and gather intelligence to unravel those behind the violence.

He gave the assurance that perpetrators would not go unpunished.